



**EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EXTERNAL ACTION**

---

**COMBINED EVALUATION OF THE EU'S  
HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA  
AND OF DG ECHO'S PARTNERSHIP  
WITH UNICEF 2019-2023**

---

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*December 2024*

Prepared by:



Landell Mills International Limited

The Old Station House

15a Main Street, Blackrock

Co. Dublin

Ireland

Pascal O'Neill - [pascal\\_oneill@landell-mills.com](mailto:pascal_oneill@landell-mills.com)

Framework Contract ECHO/E2/FWC/RC/2021/SI2

Contract No ECHO/ADM/BUD/2023/01203/911169

Contract title

Combined evaluation of the EU's humanitarian interventions in Central Africa and of DG ECHO's partnership with UNICEF 2019-2023.

---

Authors

Andrew Lawday

Veronique de Clerck

Simon Hale

Catherine Chazaly

Julian Murray

Doshiya Joy Kantiok

Joey Blindt

Yves Boya

Pascal O'Neill

Contact information:

European Commission  
Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations – DG ECHO  
Unit ECHO.E.2 Programming, Control and Reporting  
Email: [ECHO-EVAL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ECHO-EVAL@ec.europa.eu)  
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations:

[Evaluations | European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations \(europa.eu\)](#)

## LEGAL NOTICE

This document has been prepared for the European Commission as part of the evaluations of the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. However, it reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this document, and is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication. More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by the Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightsholders.

© European Union, 2024

**PART A EVALUATION OF THE EU'S HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS IN  
CENTRAL AFRICA, 2019-2023**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

This evaluation of the European Union's (EU) humanitarian interventions in central Africa (CA) 2019-2023 aims to serve learning and accountability purposes. It focuses on four countries: Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, and Nigeria, and the main components of EU humanitarian interventions: people in need of assistance; Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations (DG ECHO) responses managed through the annual Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) process; a portfolio of funded actions implemented by DG ECHO partners; and intended humanitarian outcomes. According to the intervention logic, the ultimate goal of EU humanitarian interventions in CA during 2019-2023 was to work through the interagency responses in each country to deliver a prioritized needs-based EU response across seven key sectors that helped save lives, reduce suffering, and safeguard human dignity.

EU humanitarian interventions in CA involved DG ECHO allocating EUR 666m and supporting 299 projects across the four countries during 2019-2023, with the largest share (25%) going to food security and livelihoods. But DG ECHO responses evolved significantly during this period. In 2019, the HIP addressed acute and protracted needs in Cameroon, CAR, and Chad with funding worth EUR 63.8m. By 2023, the HIP addressed rapidly growing needs in the wider West and Central Africa (WCA) region including Nigeria, with funding worth EUR 279m. During this time the region faced deteriorating crises and increasing needs, mostly in the Lake Chad Basin, CAR and its refugee outflows, the Northwest/Southwest provinces of Cameroon, and North Central and Northwest Nigeria. DG ECHO was confronted with a constellation of worsening crises, new crises, and external shocks (including COVID-19 and its effects); competing priorities across the countries; growing funding gaps; access constraints; and a lack of concrete Nexus opportunities.

### *Methodology*

The evaluation was conducted during January-November 2024 in four phases: inception (January-April), desk (April-June), field (June-August), and synthesis and reporting (September-November). Guided by the principles and practices of Evaluation of Humanitarian Action (EHA) and a Realist Evaluation perspective, it used mixed methods to collect and analyse data: portfolio analysis, sample analysis, document review, regional consultations, four country studies, and four crisis-specific case studies. It invested in a solid design phase, targeted data collection activities, and five evidence-based learning activities between the Evaluation Team (ET) and the evaluation steering group. It was constrained by the complexity of EU humanitarian interventions and related generalizability challenges, as well as the absence of DG ECHO reporting on HIPs and the portfolio of actions. It contended with important evaluability challenges such as a lack of clear multi-year objectives, a lack of HIP or country-level progress reporting, and an intensive process stretched by the pressures of arranging four country and field visits. But it encountered no hindrance to independence or impartiality, and generated the evidence needed to reach sufficiently reliable findings and conclusions.

### *Main findings*

The evaluation reached 16 main findings in response to the evaluation questions.

### *Relevance*

**Populations in need:** EU humanitarian interventions were consistently relevant to populations in urgent need in CA 2019-2023. DG ECHO responses were most relevant to conflict-affected populations and acute needs across the countries. The funded actions were always aligned with needs and priorities outlined in HIPs/HIP Technical Annexes (HIPTAs), consistently informed by needs assessments, and most often informed by the priorities of people affected. But the responses were not necessarily responsive to protracted needs, or explicitly aligned with HNOs/HRPs.

**Specific needs:** EU humanitarian interventions often responded to the specific needs of the most vulnerable groups. DG ECHO's portfolios responded to specific needs and targeted vulnerable populations; HIPs consistently defined specific needs to address by age and gender; and the funded actions often addressed specific needs and

targeted them in project designs. However, DG ECHO and funded actions also faced significant targeting challenges, used inconsistent approaches, and raised questions about how best to do targeting in practice.

**Evolving needs:** EU humanitarian interventions often addressed evolving needs. DG ECHO responses adapted to new needs and shocks, mainly by using flexible mechanisms such as the emergency toolbox and Crisis Modifiers which made the responses and funded actions highly adaptive. But DG ECHO struggled to address non-acute or protracted needs and lacked mechanisms for this.

### *Coherence*

**EU policy:** EU humanitarian interventions were almost always aligned with DG ECHO policies in CA during 2019-2023. The HIPs were aligned with the EU's humanitarian commitments and thematic policies, and DG ECHO responses were aligned across sectors and with humanitarian principles. HIPs were less clearly aligned with EU and DG ECHO policy on addressing needs in protracted crises, where intentions were less clear.

**Humanitarian coordination:** EU humanitarian interventions were always coordinated with interagency responses. DG ECHO always supported coordination by its partners and by funding UN and NGO-led coordination mechanisms. DG ECHO played an active role in coordination mechanisms and often added humanitarian value to interagency responses by funding impactful projects, reliably funding common enabling services, and donor leadership activities.

**Nexus coordination:** EU humanitarian interventions were inconsistently or rarely coordinated with development and peace actors. DG ECHO was well-placed to promote Nexus approaches, required funded actions to include Nexus elements, and made some promising progress with the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) and others in Chad. But DG ECHO promoted Nexus approaches insufficiently across the four countries, struggled with disconnects among EU services, and rarely coordinated with peacebuilding and stabilization actors.

### *EU added value*

**Donor value:** EU humanitarian interventions always added donorship value to the interagency humanitarian responses in CA during 2019-2023. As a humanitarian donor, DG ECHO added value through consistent and significant funding in the four countries and well-informed funding decisions that included hard-to-reach areas. But it also played a crucial role in each country through its unique donor leadership activities, including donor coordination, donor advocacy, and sharing its information with donors.

**EU value:** EU humanitarian interventions always added EU value to Member States (MS) in CA 2019-2023. DG ECHO donorship activities were useful to EU Member States, whether large or small donors in CA, but provided no specific or privileged support to them beyond that given to other humanitarian donors.

### *Effectiveness*

**Advocacy effectiveness:** EU humanitarian advocacy was often or sometimes effective in CA during 2019-2023. DG ECHO established wide-ranging advocacy objectives for the region and in some countries, conducted advocacy across all countries, and made broad advocacy contributions to humanitarian donorship, operational responses, and International Humanitarian Law (IHL). But HIPs and projects often lacked explicit advocacy objectives; DG ECHO's advocacy often activities lacked consistency, structure and capacities; and humanitarian advocacy in Nigeria on camp closures highlighted the limitations of outspoken principle-based advocacy.

**Overall effectiveness:** EU humanitarian interventions were consistently effective overall. DG ECHO delivered an effective, well-considered, prioritized multisectoral overall response, which contributed to saving lives across multiple emergencies in Cameroon, CAR, Chad, and Nigeria. Funded actions across the region achieved most of their implementation targets in key sectors: education (81%), nutrition (78%), protection (74%), food security (61%), and health (60%). Although DG ECHO and partners made some efforts to learn from implementation, these were limited and inconsistent.

**Effectiveness factors:** EU humanitarian interventions were rendered more or less effective by key internal and external factors. Within DG ECHO, interventions were most significantly enabled by country-level strategies

although these remained poorly articulated, HIP processes, flexible funding mechanisms, and field expertise. Externally, interventions were most enabled by sufficient financing and the presence of capable partners, although financial resources and the EU's policy focus were insufficient to meet the growing needs in the region. They were most constrained by security-related access problems, state policies and capacity gaps.

**RRM contributions:** EU humanitarian interventions were better able to rapidly address acute needs thanks to the DG ECHO-supported Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). The RRM significantly contributed to emergency responses in the four countries, by offering a rapid, multi-sector response especially for newly displaced populations in areas such as Cameroon's Far North and Chad's Lake Chad region. But the RRM could only address some temporary acute needs in a limited way, and questions arose about its coverage, funding, efficiency, and continuity.

**Network effectiveness:** EU humanitarian interventions were significantly enabled by DG ECHO's network of experts. DG ECHO field experts consistently carried out project oversight and monitoring functions, and contributed to effectiveness through their field presence and monitoring, and the technical inputs of thematic experts. However, questions arose about consistency of expertise and communication skills, rationales for project selection and prioritization, and contextual appropriateness of thematic inputs.

### *Efficiency*

**Funding allocations:** EU humanitarian interventions often made efficient funding allocations in CA during 2019-2023. DG ECHO allocations were often timely for emergency action and well in line with DG ECHO priorities. However, selection rationales were not always well understood; many allocations were too small, too short term, or inappropriate for local actors; and some disbursements were critically delayed by slow contracting processes.

**Funded actions:** EU humanitarian interventions often implemented cost-effective actions. While DG ECHO recognized the challenges of analysing cost-effectiveness and efficiency in projects and the crucial importance of contextualization, it often scrutinized project costs and calculated cost ratios, and partners were highly responsive to its comments and operational inputs. However, DG ECHO lacked a coherent and consistent approach to analysing, monitoring and managing project cost-effectiveness and efficiency, and the distinction between these concepts was not well understood.

### *Sustainability*

**Sustainability pathways:** EU humanitarian interventions only sometimes saw humanitarian benefits sustained after DG ECHO funding ended in CA. DG ECHO defined a broad approach to 'exiting' from assisting populations and often expected results to be sustained through resilience efforts. Funded actions sometimes worked with national and local systems or made efforts to support community resilience. However, few projects were sustainable in CA where national and local systems lacked capacities and development financing, and highly vulnerable communities could not sustain essential services alone. Moreover, DG ECHO lacked clarity on exit strategies, working with national and local systems, and building community resilience.

### *Conclusions*

- **Problems addressed:** EU humanitarian interventions confronted an extremely complex pattern of humanitarian crises and needs across CA during 2019-2023. The region experienced at least 13 severe crises, resulting in more than 20 million people needing humanitarian assistance, more than 30 million people being food insecure, and seven million people being forcibly displaced. Needs in the region were understood to be driven by conflict, violence, and insecurity; food insecurity; climate change; and epidemics. Equally, the link between conflict and displacement-related food insecurity became increasingly clear. At the same time, DG ECHO and humanitarian partners faced growing funding gaps in the region, where interagency responses (Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)) were consistently underfunded, and DG ECHO funding was less than for more 'visible' regions and crises.
- **Intended outcomes:** EU humanitarian interventions delivered four country-based responses focused on acute and urgent needs, which helped to save lives and alleviate suffering. The 299 funded actions



delivered a majority of their intended results across the four countries and five key sectors, and DG ECHO delivered outstanding value as a humanitarian donor in each country, making well-informed funding allocations and leading donors in coordination, information sharing, and advocacy. While DG ECHO's humanitarian advocacy was effective on technical matters and promotion of IHL, it lacked achievable objectives and a structured approach, including when it came to Nexus advocacy. However, EU interventions could rarely sustain humanitarian benefits for people affected without continued DG ECHO funding or additional Nexus efforts, given the absence of capacities in the region and communities affected. While DG ECHO was well-placed to promote Nexus approaches and made promising progress, its efforts were insufficient in all countries.

- **DG ECHO activities:** DG ECHO enabled quick responses to acute and urgent needs through flexible tools, and almost always responded to new and evolving needs through its various flexibility mechanisms—such as Crisis Modifiers, modification requests and time extensions. DG ECHO experts enabled strong technical responses aligned with EU policy and made essential contributions to the interventions. Its HIP process enabled an effective response appreciated for predictability, partner involvement, and analytical components—despite inefficiencies linked to process timing, slow disbursements, and the Single Form tool. While DG ECHO's country strategies were key enablers of effectiveness, they lacked clear articulation beyond the operational and technical levels, and raised important strategic questions about goals, scope, approach, monitoring and learning.
- **Partner actions:** DG ECHO's partners were critical to delivering relevant projects and intended results across the countries, since EU humanitarian interventions depended critically on the presence and capacities of the partners, and INGO and UN/IGO partners brought different types of capacity and comparative advantages. However, many projects were constrained by capacity issues, relating to project management and staff capacity. Meanwhile DG ECHO allocations were not necessarily appropriate for partners, such as UN and dual mandate agencies with larger country programmes, or small and local partners who could not apply directly for funding under DG ECHO rules.

## Recommendations

- **R1. Country strategies:** the EU/DG ECHO should reinforce its humanitarian country strategies in each country during 2024-2028 by better articulating them, defining clear objectives and primary approaches, and more purposefully managing (and monitoring) their implementation. Whether done through the annual HIP document or separate country documents, DG ECHO should use a light-touch approach based on dialogue and continual learning above formalized reporting.
- **R2: Multiyear Nexus vision:** the EU/DG ECHO, along with Directorate General International Partnerships (DG INTPA), European External Action Service (EEAS), and Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI), should develop a multiyear vision until 2030 for reducing humanitarian needs, vulnerabilities, and risks in the CA region through Nexus approaches. It should consider developing a consistent approach to Nexus in each country, engaging EU development actors to address protracted needs, and ensuring responsible disengagement and handover at operational level.
- **R3. Maintain operations:** DG ECHO should continue delivering operational responses focused on acute needs through its mix of partners and flexible funding mechanisms. It should continue addressing new and evolving needs through flexibility mechanisms (i.e. HIP modifications, emergency tools, Crisis Modifiers, timely re-allocations agreed by email) and using the RRM to rapidly address acute needs of newly displaced populations where other actors could not.
- **R4: Maintain expertise:** DG ECHO should maintain and build upon its network of field experts, to ensure projects are well enough designed and implemented. It should consider maintaining a strong country presence in each country with field experts and thematic experts actively involved in field monitoring and technical visits, and further supporting them with any missing policy guidance (e.g. on localization, entry/exit strategies, and capacity building) and practical guidance on providing consistent inputs, rationales for project selection and prioritization, and context-appropriate communication.
- **R5: Streamline processes:** DG ECHO should review HIP processes for engaging partners to ensure they are appropriately streamlined for emergency responses. It should consider reviewing the process time and bottlenecks in contracting and funding disbursements, the timing of the proposals and project design process, and the utility (including user-friendliness) of the Single Form tool.

## **PART B EVALUATION OF DG ECHO'S PARTNERSHIP WITH UNICEF, 2019-2023**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

This is an independent evaluation of Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations' (DG ECHO) partnership with UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) during 2019-2023. Its primary purpose is to facilitate learning for both organizations. It focuses on children's humanitarian needs worldwide, DG ECHO's partnering activities, UNICEF's partnership activities, and their joint achievements for children.

DG ECHO's partnership with UNICEF comprised three main dimensions: institutional interactions, policy/advocacy interactions, and operational interactions. At institutional level, the partners collaborated on a growing range of topics during this period, held annual High-level dialogues (bilateral) and Strategic dialogues (with other EU services), and DG ECHO coordinated EU participation on UNICEF's Executive Board. At policy/advocacy level, the partners interacted most on Education in Emergencies (EiE) and Nutrition, two sectors where DG ECHO was UNICEF's largest humanitarian funder. At operational level, DG ECHO allocated a total of EUR 944m to UNICEF during 2019-2023, funding 187 humanitarian actions across multiple countries, over 75% of them in the Middle East and Africa.

### *Methodology*

This evaluation was conducted from January to November 2024. At inception, it reconstructed a 'partnership logic', which was important in the absence of an explicit framework and objectives for the partnership and developed flexible judgment criteria to conduct the assessment. At desk and field phases, it adopted a holistic perspective and purposive sampling strategies and used mixed methods for data collection and analysis. These included portfolio analysis, document review, sample analysis of projects, and stakeholder consultation. Throughout the process, it engaged users (i.e. the steering group) in five evidence and learning sessions to promote learning. In practice, the evaluation relied primarily on rich qualitative data collected through interviews with a structured sample of 20 key informants from both DG ECHO and UNICEF, supported by the best available documents and data analysis. It confronted significant evaluability limitations in the absence of clear partnership objectives, relevant data and documentation, and its resources were stretched given the scale, scope, and complexity of the partnership. But it encountered no hindrance to evaluative independence or impartiality, and it offers a rigorous assessment to support learning about the partnership, based primarily on perceptions-based evidence.

### *Key findings*

#### *Alignment*

**DG ECHO and UNICEF goals were often well aligned, and their humanitarian activities were almost always complementary.**

- At institutional level, DG ECHO and UNICEF were highly compatible in their missions and aligned on providing specific needs-based humanitarian action for children as a vulnerable group. But they are different types of organization with different purposes and accountabilities, and their humanitarian priorities could potentially diverge.
- At policy/advocacy level, they were well aligned on most humanitarian policy frameworks and issues, and conducted joint high-level humanitarian advocacy focused on funding and underfunded crises. They were committed to nutrition and education in emergencies (EiE) and conducted joint advocacy on these too. But DG ECHO's policy focus was more emergency-focused than UNICEF's more holistic humanitarian commitments in both sectors.
- At operational level, they were equally committed to humanitarian principles and a needs-based approach, and their projects were well aligned in terms of needs assessments and EU policy. But they diverged somewhat in operational modalities since DG ECHO funded 'projects' and UNICEF implemented 'programmes', as well as in their operational approaches to partnerships, national governments, and brand visibility.

## *Coordination*

**DG ECHO and UNICEF activities were consistently well-coordinated at institutional and policy levels, but not necessarily at operational level.**

- At institutional level, they coordinated their interactions through formal dedicated liaison structures, DG ECHO's Unit D1 and UNICEF's partnership division/Brussels office, and through annual bilateral High-Level Dialogues (HLDs) which enabled them to coordinate priorities and share views in a structured way. They also coordinated through Strategic Dialogues for EU services and UNICEF, which offered an opportunity to promote Nexus approaches.
- At policy/advocacy level, they coordinated their activities, e.g. in EiE and nutrition, through ongoing semi-formal (i.e. frequent and fluid) interactions between policy experts. These were reinforced and complemented by the HLDs.
- At operational level, the dialogues and policy coordination activities had little impact or traction within each organization.

## *Achievements*

**DG ECHO's partnership with UNICEF consistently enabled achievement of common goals, and notably when policy and operational activities were combined.**

- At institutional level, DG ECHO provided 7% of UNICEF's humanitarian funding and was consistently able to meet its own gender and age requirements, addressed the specific needs of boys and girls in line with UNICEF's benchmark commitments, and contributed to meeting the humanitarian needs of children in crises worldwide, most notably by helping them access education, treating acute malnutrition, and providing multisector assistance.
- At policy/advocacy level, they jointly drew attention to underfunded crises among UN members, by convening five ambassador-level discussions on children in underfunded crises at UN headquarters. In nutrition, their joint advocacy helped improve World Health Organization (WHO) protocols for addressing acute malnutrition in emergencies. In education, their joint advocacy included a high-level event during the European Humanitarian Forum (EHF) which helped sustain the EiE commitment among Member States and others.
- At operational level, they achieved notable successes in EiE, nutrition, and emergency response. The East Africa (EA) Pilot Programmatic Partnership (PPP) tested an innovative localized approach to ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), captured learning, and promoted improvements to wider nutrition policy. The conditional cash transfers for education (CCTEs) in Türkiye enabled 800,000 Syrian refugee children to attend school, using conditional cash and a systemic approach sustained by the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR).

## *Efficiency*

**DG ECHO's partnership with UNICEF was not consistently efficient or cost-effective, and tools were lacking to manage these aspects.**

- At institutional level, the partnership's overall efficiency was increased by good dialogue and interactions at institutional level, based on like-mindedness.
- At operational level, diverse factors of efficiency were identified across different projects, but the partners lacked methods and tools to manage efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The quality of dialogue also varied considerably at country and operational levels—although regional offices could be well placed to enhance partnership at this level.

## *Partnership approach*

## **DG ECHO's Strategic Partnership approach with UNICEF was often effective.**

- The approach involved structured dialogues and DG ECHO providing inputs to UNICEF's executive board, but, ultimately, the partnership was based on a shared sense of 'genuine partnership' at institutional level, where each contributed their distinct capacities to achieve common goals.
- The Strategic Partnership streamlined and enhanced interactions through structured dialogues that steered the partnership and multiple relationships at different levels, and through the establishment of a dedicated desk/focal point in DG ECHO.
- Although the Strategic Partnership was intended to be suitably loose and flexible, it lacked important strategic elements: an agreed framework, directions and objectives, prioritized joint efforts, and evidence of achievements.

## **Conclusions**

- **Shared challenge:** Concerning shared humanitarian challenges, the DG ECHO partnership with UNICEF responded compatibly to the specific humanitarian needs of children in emergencies. Children were often worst affected by complex crises and their needs were growing worldwide. However, the partners risked overlooking important differences in their purpose and accountabilities, and potential divergences in humanitarian priorities.
- **Joint achievements:** Concerning joint achievements, the partnership enabled delivery of assistance to children in emergencies and various notable achievements. It consistently enabled DG ECHO and UNICEF to achieve common goals, address the specific needs of children, and better address the humanitarian needs of children in crises worldwide. Notably, in education, the CCTE model unlocked Nexus opportunities when the CCTEs in Türkiye enabled 800,000 Syrian refugee children to attend school And in nutrition, the EA PPP model brought together operational and policy dimensions through evidence and learning activities, followed by joint advocacy that helped improve WHO protocols for addressing acute malnutrition.
- **DG ECHO partnering:** Concerning DG ECHO partnering activities, the partnership was managed according to DG ECHO's strategic partnership approach, and involved multiple interactions at different levels reinforced by formal annual dialogues, as well as strong policy engagements and joint advocacy on specific themes. Most importantly, it reflected a genuine partnership, beyond a purely transactional relationship between donor and implementer, where DG ECHO was 'more than just a funder', and UNICEF was 'more than just an implementer'. But the genuine partnership could not be taken for granted at all levels and needed constant building. Additionally, the Strategic Partnership could have been further strengthened through the adoption of clear goals and an agreed framework to guide the dialogues, policy advocacy, and operational actions at multiple levels.
- **UNICEF partnership:** Concerning UNICEF partnership activities, the partnership relied on UNICEF's good management of the relationship. UNICEF coordinated its 'multifaceted' partnership with DG ECHO through the Humanitarian Aid Section of its EU Office in Brussels, which managed all interactions with DG ECHO, coordinated the involvement of UNICEF actors, and aimed to promote coherence in the partnership. This was highly appreciated by UNICEF policy leads. Besides operational successes, the partnership experienced numerous challenges relating to projects, most notably linked to issues surrounding DG ECHO's project funding modality and UNICEF's programmatic approach, unresolved questions about UNICEF's cost effectiveness and added value, and inconsistent partnership practices at operational level.

## **Recommendations**

- **R1. Sustain the partnership.** DG ECHO should sustain the multilevel partnership with UNICEF towards 2030. It should continue to implement the strategic partnership approach, reinforce the genuine partnership with UNICEF, promote institutional interactions (formal and informal), engage purposefully with UNICEF on policy and advocacy, and fund UNICEF to implement EU-funded humanitarian actions that address the specific humanitarian needs of children in crises.

- **R2. Enhance the partnership.** DG ECHO should develop the Strategic Partnership approach with UNICEF into a broad multiyear framework and strategy until 2030 with increased operational involvement. It should consider developing a flexible multiyear framework agreement, managing the partnership in a more strategic manner (including by setting clear goals and monitoring them), and strengthening the operational partnership, for example, through specific guidance to DG ECHO and UNICEF operational staff at country level.
- **R3. Learn about what works.** DG ECHO should learn lessons periodically from the partnership with UNICEF, with a view to strengthening the partnership and its effectiveness at institutional, policy, and operational levels. It should reflect on the partnership logic used for this evaluation, learn from notable achievements and diffuse promising approaches/models (such as the CCTE, the EA PPP, and high-level advocacy activities at the UN and EU), and better manage key factors of effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency.

## The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - ECHO

### ECHO Mission

The primary role of the Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) of the European Commission is to manage and coordinate the European Union's emergency response to conflicts, natural and man-made disasters. It does so both through the delivery of humanitarian aid and through the coordination and facilitation of in-kind assistance, specialist capacities, expertise and intervention teams using the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)

### Follow us:



:[https://twitter.com/eu\\_echo](https://twitter.com/eu_echo)



:<https://www.facebook.com/ec.humanitarian.aid>



:[https://www.instagram.com/eu\\_echo/](https://www.instagram.com/eu_echo/)



:<https://www.youtube.com/user/HumanitarianAidECHO>

